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## Breaking Through The Veneer

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# Breaking Through The Veneer

## **Writing Process**

I initially approached this paper merely as an assignment for my English 100 class, but I became increasingly enthusiastic as I continued to develop my thoughts. This ordinary assignment transformed into a fun, exciting process. I pondered my favorite books, my influential teachers, and my childhood before beginning to write. The conclusions regarding my personal identity as a reader and a writer that I make in this paper were revealed to me through my reflection. After a few drafts and a trip to the Write Place, I have produced an essay that mirrors my personal literacy journey.

## **Course**

ENG100

## **Semester**

Spring

## **Instructor**

Prof. Arnecia Patterson

## **Year**

2015

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### Breaking Through the Veneer\*

More than once I have been called out in class for hiding, not a cell phone, but a novel. I was the kid whose teachers had to reprimand for reading. I loved to read and could not stop. My mom called me “a marathon reader” due to the fact that I would pick up a book and proceed to read it cover to cover only stopping for meals and bathroom breaks. The plot, the characters, and the themes that infiltrated my mind made books impossible to put aside. My love for novels and stories has continued to grow exponentially as I have made my way through elementary, middle, and high school. After my first semester of college, I have finally realized that reading is my passion, and that I want reading to be at the center of my professional life. Therefore, becoming an acquisitions book editor, one who decides which manuscripts to publish, has become my ultimate goal. By publishing books, I realized that I could participate in the process of placing quality, inspiring, and powerful books into the hands of present and future generations. The evolution of my understanding of literacy began by falling in love with stories as a child, strengthened by breaking down literature as a student, and pushed me to pursue my passion for books as a career.

My daily life as a college student, striving towards my vocational goal, consists of utilizing my personal literacy to function and to work. With editing in my headlights, I declared

an English major and have begun my journey at the University of Dayton. Currently, I am trying my best to fit both academic and pleasure reading into my schedule. Every morning I make myself wake up early enough to catch the headlines of the *New York Times* with my coffee, and every few weeks I make a special trip to the Roesch library for a new novel. The amount of in-depth reading for classes has consumed so much of my brain power and time that it has become a struggle to fit novels into my daily routine. However, as soon as my eyes fall onto that first page, a calm falls upon me. Since literature has such a powerful effect on me, I have wondered where my love for books stemmed. Reflecting on my past, I realized that all the moments I spent in libraries, on couches, and under the guidance of my parents have impacted my current state. This accumulation of moments instilled in me my love for books, and therefore my past has inevitably led me to my present life.

My love for books sprung from my attraction to stories. Novels, at their core, are stories. Therefore my literacy in novels must have begun under the covers hearing bedtime stories told by my parents. I began associating books with excitement and anticipation because of the adventures of a giant named Fin M'Coul and the imagination of Max in *Where the Wild Things Are*. To hear my father's fake Irish accent and my mother's soothing voice tell the most outrageous and crazy tales brought me absolute delight as a young girl. My parents harbored my interest in stories, which eventually led me to read chapter books, such as the *Box Car Children*, as an elementary school student. As I continued my formal education, I was assigned to read numerous novels. Unlike the majority of my classmates, I found absolute bliss in reading *The Westing Game*, *The Great Gatsby*, and *The Scarlet Letter*. Until my junior year of high school, I appreciated books because of my attraction to the surface level plot and characters within the

novels I read. Stories will always entice me; however, a greater understanding of the elements of literature, taught to me by a brilliant teacher, will solidify my relationship with books.

Mrs. Dillenberger, living up to her reputation as a tough yet esteemed teacher, transformed the way I approached literature during my junior and senior years of high school. She defined a gamut of vocabulary concerning the elements of literature, and then proceeded to give examples through plays, short stories, poems, and novels. My greater understanding of literature terminology provided insight into the messages of the literary works we read. Mrs. Dillenberger introduced me to the hidden meaning of Shakespeare, Achebe, Hardy, Goethe, Austen, and Homer. In fifth period, I learned how to analyze a piece of literature and appreciate the value of books on a deeper level. I studied how organization, symbolism, personification, metaphors, genres, and foreshadowing permeated the text of good writers. As a result of in-depth study, literature unveiled its layers of meaning and significance. I was enlightened to the messages and lessons embodied in literature's enigmas, and simply by obtaining such awareness, my passion for reading intensified. Mrs. Dillenberger taught me to break through the veneer of words on a page. Her influence on my literacy is crucial to the reader and writer I am today, and furthermore she inspired me to pursue editing as a career.

With a passion for novels and the skills to examine them, I have been inspired to chase my dream of becoming an editor. As I work towards gaining my degree, I use my literacy constantly. From the moment that I wake up, I am reading. Whether I am perusing emails, the *New York Times*, textbooks, or the *Harry Potter* series, I feel my love for words pounding in my head and heart as I read with a critical eye. By reading the descriptions of my classes for the next three years, that same giddiness that rattled my being as young girl perusing fairytales consumes me. However, harbored in my heart lives the anticipation for my career. The occupation that I

work towards allows me to appreciate stories, make improvements, and publish them for all current and future people to read. The power, to handpick the words that could excite, inspire, and call to action my peers and our youth, electrifies every particle of my being. Therefore, my progression from a story-loving youth, to a prodding, thoughtful student, to an inspired dream chaser inevitably deems my existence dependent upon my literacy. I am a reader. I will carry my literacy with me throughout my life because reading ignites a part of me that I could never live without.

\*This essay received the Award for Excellence in Literacy Narrative Writing